CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.585
28 February 1991

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 February 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Carl-Magnus Hyltenius (Sweden)

GE.91-60416/3033B

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 585th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we proceed with our business today, I wish to extend to the delegation of the Netherlands, as President of the Conference, our deep condolences on the loss of a distinguished and able diplomat, Mr. Robert Jan Akkerman, who served in the Conference between 1982 and 1985 and was, during his duties in Geneva, Chairman of Working Group B of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. Mr. Akkerman leaves behind him many friends who will always remember his competence and human qualities. I ask Ambassador Wagenmakers, to express our sorrow to his Government and to the family of the deceased.

I have on my list of speakers today the representatives of Chile and the United States of America, as well as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, who will introduce the progress report of the Ad Hoc Group, which was circulated today as document CD/1065. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Tomic.

Mr. TOMIC (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to extend to you and to Sweden, your noble country, which has preserved peace for more than a century and a half, the compliments of the delegation of Chile on whose behalf I speak.

The contradiction between the longing for peace eagerly shared by the vast majority of mankind, and the insane pace of the arms build-up - $2 million every minute! - and the blood-stained use of weapons on an increasingly threatening scale, particularly in the course of the last 50 years, forms the framework within which our deliberations on disarmament are taking place. It is indeed a strange framework, one which obliges us to reflect on the root cause of this contradiction that is so flagrant, so sustained, so alien to the essential identity of the whole of the human race.

True, 20 centuries ago St. Paul identified this contradiction in a sort of mystery of human nature, a mystery for which there is no ethical or rational explanation: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do". True, the Romans coined the axiom Si vis pacem para bellum - if you seek peace, prepare for war. True, more than a century ago, one of the most influential statesmen in the destiny of Europe at the time, Bismarck coined the same phrase in his well-known dictum: "The alternatives are clear. A choice must be made between being the anvil or the hammer; beating or being beaten".

What is war and what are weapons, if not the most acute and unambiguous manifestation of the desire to dominate based on force, multiform in its origin and expression but always motivated by the intention of using coercion or the threat of coercion by one human over another, by one social group over other social groups in internal conflicts, by one State - the nations as juridically organized - over other States at the international level? War, and the weapons that are indispensable for it, are but the return to the animal instinct, which makes use of intelligence to enhance its depredatory power, ignoring all ethical values.

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

I would like to conclude this preamble to my statement with a memory that I will never forget: the thrilling appeal made by Pope Paul VI in the plenary Assembly hall of the United Nations in New York, in which he was guest of honour and sole speaker. The number of highly distinguished figures and other people thronging together to hear Paul VI, this man of God, could hardly have been greater. The Pope had been invited to speak of peace and war. The power stemming from his own conviction that he was but the instrument of God progressively transformed the expectant silence with which he was initially received by the multitude into a kind of growing and fascinating vibration. He had no papers in his hands. And when he finished, he summed his whole speech up in a single sentence that was repeated time and again: "Lay down your weapons! Lay down your weapons!" The electrified crowd broke into endless applause, interspersed with the tears of some and the joy of others; and hope and gratitude on the part of all. For a long time they forgot whether they were athiests or believers, communists or capitalists, Russians or Americans, rich or poor, white or African or Asian. For that moment, we only knew - we only wanted to know! - that we were men and women united by the indestructable reality of being part of one single race - the human race; that they shared one single nature - human nature; and that their destiny could be realized only in plenitude, solidarity and brotherhood and not through the overt or concealed desire for the will to subjection or domination, which is the other name for weapons and wars.

As if lit by a flash of lightning, we all felt our thoughts to be interpreted by that thrilling appeal by the Pope: "Lay down your weapons!". But the lighting that rends the darkness of the night illuminates the Earth only for a few seconds. Almost 25 years have passed since this ecumenical experience in which I had the privilege of participating. What remains of it? To what did it lead? Only God can weigh it all up in a long-term historical perspective. We are all aware of the terrifying development of the deadly power of weapons, in this intermediate period which in these very days has cast a gloom over Europe, the Near and Far East, Africa and Asia, Latin America and Saxon America, not forgetting Oceania.

The blood that has been shed and the blood which may be shed in the near future, involving hundreds of thousands of human beings, the hunger which undermines the fundamental dignity of more than a billion men, women and children, and which is no longer the consequence of misforture, but in our time of injustice; the scandalous inequalities between the haves and have-nots (not only at the international level but also within one and the same country), the evil fruit of systematic selfishness and of profit and greed as the highest mechanisms regulating the unequal confrontation in world trade between those who control science and technology, capital and markets, production and productivity, and those who in contrast have minimal access to these factors, which are decisive in ensuring that "free competition", "free markets" and foreign borrowing that is direct (loans) or indirect (investment protected by special regulations that begin by requiring that investors are guaranteed good business and dependable profits) are not used to legitimize the unequal and unfair competition between the group of highly industrialized countries, enjoying per capita incomes of over $20 thousand a year and the two thirds of the "submerged humanity" of the underdeveloped countries with

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

per capita incomes that hardly amount to $400 a year, according to the official documents that have been published by United Nations agencies themselves this very year.

This philosophy is anti-humanist because it involves the deliberate rejection of any ethical or moral concept, any standard of reference that begins by distinguishing between what is just and what is unjust, and opposes the indispensable pre-eminence that must be given to equity over the alleged automaticity of the "laws of the market" that have been the "slaughter house" of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the latecomers to the possession and control of scientific and technological progress and the levers of power that stem therefrom. As the Venezuelan Andrés Bello, the most brilliant, universal and disciplined mind produced by Latin America in the ninteenth century, taught, since everything is related to everything else on the plane of knowledge and human destiny, what is known as "national security", based on weapons and on preparations for war, cannot be separated from the set of problems that have divided the world into a minority of "victors" and a vast majority of "victims".

For the present Government of Chile, the promotion of human rights is not only a matter of legal relevance, but also of unquestionable political importance for the task of generating confidence and stability. All that, taking into account the new concepts of national security - it is not irrelevant here - and its international dimensions. If there is no resolute action undertaken to combat the essential and most important causes that are eroding this national security - everything is related to everything else - like the enormous and disproportionate spiralling of expenditure on weapons, the serious deterioration of the environment, economic dependence, the enormous external indebtedness of the poor countries of the world, the low levels of participation in scientific and technological development, scant negotiating capacity at the international level etc., etc., any agreement on disarmament confined to problems of weaponry will be built on very precarious foundations or will be unworkable in the face of the fundamental challenges of a stable and fair world required by mankind today.

It would not be right to conclude these thoughts without referring to the comprehensive proposal made by Pope John Paul II in his recent encyclical letter sollicitudo Rei Socialis, because it contains two elements that I wish to highlight, the negative judgement on what is happening today, but the opening of horizons for hope, the possibility that things can be different:

> "The serious disorder in the world is compounded by the tremendous and universally acknowledged danger represented by atomic weapons, stockpiled on an incredible scale. The logical conclusion is that in today's world, including the world of economics, the prevailing picture is one destined to lead all of us more quickly towards death rather than one which is channelled towards true development which would lead all towards a 'more human life', as envisaged by the Encyclical Populorum Progressio."

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

But further on John Paul II underlines the positive option that the very crisis of today's disorder offers to the world of tomorrow, adding:

> "At the same time, in a world divided and beset by every type of conflict, the conviction is growing of a radical interdependence and consequently of the need for a solidarity which will take up interdependence and transfer it to the moral plane. Today perhaps more than in the past, people are realizing that they are linked together by a common destiny, which is to be constructed together, if catastrophe for all is to be avoided."

An overall evaluation of our Conference. This is the second theme of my statement this morning, which does not aim to be exhaustive but to mention, as we see them, from the point of view of the Chilian mission, some of the issues that affect us more particularly. The important agreements that have already been concluded in the area of arms reductions, especially in relation to nuclear weapons, are basically the result of bilateral negotiations between the great Powers and the military alliances each heads or headed; but it is essential for these encouraging processes to be complemented properly at the multilateral level, in order that the entire international community should be involved in a genuine process of disarmament that would cover not only highly destructive weapons, but also conventional weapons, which nowadays consume more than two thirds of expenditure on arms. In that context, the work of the Conference should be strengthened as it is the only multilateral forum in the United Nations system entrusted with negotiating agreements on disarmament. Obviously, the fundamental condition for progress lies in the indispensable political will of all the States represented here to participate substantively in the negotiations. But "political will" in turn is possible only when a common goal is shared; it is the known and desired objective that determines the means of attaining it because the conviction that disarmament is in the interests of the world community and all the States that make it up is the essential basis for successful negotiations in view of the fact that they will be of benefit to all parties, and not just a few.

Chile joined this Conference two years ago as a non-member State. From the point of view of my country, allow me to give a critical and respectfully intended assessment of its work. For too long, the Conference has been stagnating with regard to its main tasks; a negative situation which has just been demonstrated in the Gulf war. It seems to us that perhaps the main cause of this clear shortcoming lies in the group structure, which is an achronistic and inoperative in the context of "acceleration of history" which is changing the international scene at an extraordinary pace; a phenomenon which has not been reflected in perceptible changes in the assessment and the conduct of important delegations vis-à-vis the essential objectives which inspire or should inspire this special institution.

A tangible example of the foregoing is to be found in the decisions concerning procedures adopted by the Conference the Thursday before last. After four weeks of consultations, the Conference has recently been able to adopt decisions enabling the commencement of the work for this year, through the establishment of ad hoc committees entrusted with dealing with the different agenda items. The mandates given to these committees are frankly

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

restrictive with regard to the potential for making progress in specific negotiations. In other cases agreement on the establishment of these working groups was not even possible, and it was decided to undertake informal consultations. In this regard we fully share the dissatisfaction voiced time and again in this room by the Group of 21 about the scope of the mandates given to these committees.

But the shortcomings are not only limited to the work of the committees. In general there is a very dangerous lack of transparency in the negotiations and in the decisions, owing to the repeated use made of "informal consultations" to which non-member States have no access. At the same time, the groups that exist here do not allow observer States to attend their internal discussions, thus preventing them from participating with suggestions or making contributions to negotiations which also concern them as well as the community of nations. Finally, it is upsetting that despite the many years that have gone by, the Conference has still not been able to settle the problem of its enlargement to include four more members - an aspiration which is shared by Chile and which prompted it to submit its candidature for membership. In short, we consider that the crisis caused by the disappearance of the bipolar world and the turbulence that accompanies the still confused emergence of a new international order, a proposal which is taking shape and being repeated as an absolute necessity from the highest levels of those who have the power to give this new international order shape, does not yet seem to have been assimilated within this Conference, nor is it reflected as a factor of the objectives and methods of the aforementioned new international order, within which a policy of disarmament is one of the main elements.

This is an assessment I am making from a strictly constructive and objective viewpoint, like several distinguished ambassadors of member countries who have done so in similar terms in this room. Thereby I wish to make it absolutely clear that my country is most interested in the success of this Conference. For the new Government of Chile it is a primordial aim to be reintegrated in the concert of nations, and among other initiatives it plans to participate actively in the Conference on Disarmament. For this purpose I wish to inform you that we have enlarged our delegation in order to be able to cover as many committees as possible, making useful contributions towards the common objective.

I would not wish to conclude this statement without referring briefly to the topics at the centre of the Conference's attention at its present session. I refer to chemical weapons, nuclear testing and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As far as chemical weapons are concerned, my country has repeatedly advocated the prompt signature of a convention expressly prohibiting the production, stockpiling and use of this type of weapons, as well as the complete destruction of those that already exist. We said so in this forum in 1989, and also mentioned the fact at the ministerial conference in Paris. Unfortunately, the political drive that was generated at this latter important meeting has disappeared. My country considers that in order to attain the objective of banning these deadly weapons once and for all, the support of all nations or the great majority of them is necessary.

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

Universality is an essential prerequisite. Destruction should be complete and immediate, and effective and transparent verification machinery must also be set up. Last December, in keeping with Chile's interest in contributing to the creation of the required climate of international confidence, my delegation circulated, document CD/1042, which constituted a response to the suggested outline for the multilateral exchange of basic data proposed by Germany. With regard to the destruction of stockpiles and its possible negative repercussions on the environment, we are interested in and support Peru's initiative for the inclusion in the draft convention of a chapter on the preservation and cleaning up of the environment. In fact, for several months certain delegations have been proposing a ministerial conference to be held in the near future to define the necessary political guidelines for the finalization of the negotiations. While supporting this idea, we would like to say that invitations to this Conference should in our view be addressed not only to the member States of the Conference on Disarmament, but also to observer States as well as those that are not in either of the two above categories, in order to try to make the convention truly universal.

In the area of nuclear testing, Chile supported the initiative submitted by Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Yugoslavia to amend the Moscow Treaty and make progress towards a total nuclear text ban. We took this position on the basis of the following considerations: The commitment made by the nuclear Powers themselves to achieve substantial progress in favour of nuclear disarmament, in conformity with the provisions laid down in the preamble and in article IV of the partial test-ban Treaty; our concern about the prolongation and stagnation of these negotiations; the climate of greater security and confidence that has substantially reduced the risk of war between the super-Powers, and which has made it possible and necessary for the international community to act with greater political decisiveness; and finally, the concern of quite a number of countries, including Chile, with regard to the fact that the refusal to accept the complete cessation of tests may come to be interpreted as an expectation of the modernization of existing nuclear arsenals on the part of the nuclear Powers.

The results of the Amendment Conference held last January were rather meagre, in our view. Nevertheless, we think that it had the great merit of serving as a means to express a desire which has long been held by world public opinion, especially in those countries that have no nuclear weapons. Therefore we consider that the mandate given to the President of the Amendment Conference, to commence informal consultations on possible points of consensus, is encouraging. As the Conference on Disarmament is the sole forum for multilateral negotiations, the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee last year was an important step and we only regret that for 1991 this group does not have a genuine negotiating mandate.

Chile's interest in participating actively in efforts designed to bring about a cessation of nuclear tests led it to apply last January to be allowed to participate in the committee of scientific experts to examine international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events. Drawing on the unenviable experience that our country, for geological reasons has built up in

(Mr. Tomic, Chile)

seismographic matters, I might add that our intention is not to co-operate only with the above-mentioned committee, but also in the GSETT-2 technical experiments which will take place between next April and May.

Finally, Chile has for many years been urging the need for legal controls on the peaceful uses of outer space, which should benefit all States. We are therefore concerned at the arms race in space, since instead of the search for co-operative aims the inevitable end result will be its continued militarization. The Conference should give the Ad Hoc Committee an adequate mandate to initiate substantive negotiations, without prejudice to the important task that has been entrusted to COPUOS in this field. Taking into account the importance of this topic, Chile circulated document CD/915 in 1989.

For all the foregoing reasons, my country attaches special importance to the Conference on Disarmament. A forum of this type, I repeat, cannot be a closed circle, when its decisions affect or have a bearing on the international community as a whole. Objectively speaking, peace, the supreme objective of the United Nations, is not the desire of just a few, but the aspiration of all. In this context, the Government of Chile feels the moral obligation to help to outline minimal conditions of justice and security corresponding to the democratic values that we regard as absolutely indispensable. Therefore we are ready to carry out measures of solidarity both regionally as well as internationally to strengthen the stability of countries and remove the threat of war. The present structure of this Conference is perhaps not conducive to these noble aims. For that reason we consider that there is an urgent need to restructure it so that all nations have an opportunity to join or at least express themselves on an equal footing.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): I have a brief, procedural statement to make this morning, but since it is my first formal intervention this session, I would like to join with those who have already congratulated you, Mr. President, upon your assumption of the presidency for this part of the Conference's 1991 session. I would also like to welcome our new colleagues, recently arrived.

Last year in a statement to the Conference on Disarmament I said that the United States and the Soviet Union made important progress in the area of nuclear testing verification by the signing of the protocols to the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty. Both these protocols were made available informally to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 1 during their meeting of 9 August 1990.

Today I want to inform the Conference that the United States and the Soviet Union exchanged instruments of ratification and protocols for the two nuclear testing treaties in Houston, Texas, on 11 December 1990. I am at the same time requesting that the 1974 United States-USSR threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 United States-USSR peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty together with their respective protocols become official documents of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

Ratification and exchange of instruments brought into force the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty banning underground nuclear weapons tests with yields exceeding 150 kilotons. When President Bush signed the instruments of ratification he expressed the hope that the treaties "will lead to even more important advances in arms control and the preservation of world peace and security."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Before I invite Dr. Dahlman to take the floor, I should like to ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor on matters other than the progress report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts. I recognize the distinguished representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): I hope to express my feelings of congratulations in relation to your assumption of the Chair on another occasion.

Today I would like to thank the President of the Conference on Disarmament, on behalf of the Netherlands delegation, for his expression of condolence on the tragic death of our friend and colleague, Robert Jan Akkerman. I also thank the other colleagues who came to see us and shared our sorrow. It was with great shock and sadness that we learned about his murder in Tunis last night. The life of a talented young diplomat - he was 40 years of age - has come to an unforeseen end. In addition to his talents as a diplomat, both in the multilateral and in the bilateral context, Robert Jan was also a respected international lawyer in his own right. During his Geneva years he served, amongst other assignments, as Chairman of Working Group B of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which at the time was presided over by the Ambassador of Sweden, Ambassador Ekéus. Further to that, he was a member of the Netherlands delegation to many General Assemblies of the United Nations. When I myself first joined the arms control and disarmament community in 1979, I found Robert Jan in the Chair of the main working body of the conference which prepared the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. At that moment he was 29 years of age. A promising career and a dedicated life has been finished in an untimely way.

Once again, I thank you, Mr. President, and all colleagues and friends who have shown their participation in our grief. I will not fail to transmit your and their condolences to the next of kin.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Wagenmakers. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor before I give the floor to Dr. Dahlman? I see none. I now given the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, Dr. Ola Dahlman, to introduce the Group's progress report on its thirty-first session.

Mr. DAHLMAN (Sweden): I am pleased to introduce today the progress report of the recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, contained in document CD/1065. This meeting, which was the thirty-first session of the Group, took place between 11 and 21 February 1991. Experts and representatives from 26 countries participated. Representatives from WMO participated during discussions on data communication. The Group enjoyed throughout the session the eminent services of the secretariat. This session was the last in a series of meetings to prepare for full-scale testing within the Group's Second Large Technical Test, usually referred to as GSETT-2. I can report today that we have now completed our preparatory work and have decided to conduct the full-scale test later this spring, from 22 April to 9 June 1991.

As part of GSETT-2, two preparatory tests have been conducted since our last session in August 1990. A data communication experiment conducted in October-November 1990 turned out to be most useful in sorting out a number of practical communication problems. A one-week trial experiment conducted between 26 November and 2 December 1990 involved not only data transmission but also seismic recording and data analysis at 24 national and 4 experimental international data centres (usually referred to as EIDCs). It showed that the procedures established for GSETT-2 with very few exceptions worked well and that in general they had been properly implemented in those countries which participated in the test. Also the communications between national and experimental international data centres and the high-speed connections among the EIDCs proved with few exceptions to function in a satisfactory way. The Group expects no particular difficulties in solving the few remaining technical problems. It is the opinion of the Group that the facilities that have been participating in the preparatory work and in the various trial tests are now well prepared for the full-scale testing.

Thus far, 28 countries have indicated their intention to establish national data centres and to participate in the upcoming main phase of GSETT-2. This participation is essential for the full-scale experiment. Several additional countries have expressed an interest in participating in GSETT-2 if the necessary arrangements can be completed in time for the start of the main phase. Such participation will improve the results of the experiment and is strongly encouraged. The Group expressed its appreciation for the efforts of Finland and Austria in supporting the participation of Zambia and Peru. The Ad Hoc Group has on a number of occasions stressed the importance of broadening participation in GSETT-2 to meet the objectives of the large-scale test.

One important purpose of GSETT-2 is to demonstrate that a global system can operate in the real environment, that is, cope with all the earthquakes that occur around the world. If large areas do not contribute data from any stations a large number of earthquakes will go undetected and this will reduce the actual load on the system and make the test a little bit less realistic and the results more difficult to assess. I still hope that more countries which so far have not joined the test will find it possible to do so. You can rely on the co-operation of the co-ordinator of GSETT-2, Mr. Basham of Canada, and myself in bringing about the necessary practical arrangements.

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

As I have said before, this full-scale testing is a large undertaking involving hundreds of scientists, engineers and technicians at seismological centres and communication facilities around the world. To my knowledge this is the largest single multilateral experiment ever undertaken for the purpose of testing a component of a verification system for arms limitation and disarmament.

The actual conduct of this test is one important undertaking. To evaluate the results and to draw the relevant conclusions from these results is another important step which also requires careful planning. The Group discussed criteria for such an evaluation on the basis of material presented by a specially appointed study group. To allow for a comprehensive evaluation, pertinent information has to be collected systematically during the test, and the Group agreed on guidelines for the collection and compilation of the necessary information.

The material thus compiled and the experience gained at national and experimental international data centres will form the necessary basis for the evaluation of GSETT-2. This evaluation is not only aimed at clarifying the factual results of the test, it should further and most importantly provide an assessment of how these results will affect the design of the global system and what modifications, if any, need to be made to the preliminary design presented in March 1989 in the Group's fifth report (CD/903).

The Group believes it will be important for some facilities to remain available during 1992 to conduct additional tests that might be required for a successful evaluation of GSETT-2.

The Group intends to present a preliminary report on the results of GSETT-2 at its next session. The comprehensive report, including an analysis of the consequences of the results of GSETT-2 for the overall system design, will be submitted in 1992, hopefully as early as during the spring session.

Although the Group's attention is presently focused on the successful conduct of the full-scale test, the Group had a preliminary discussion on its activities beyond this test. A wide range of issues were raised in the Group during this discussion. One such issue was whether a global system should contain four international data centres or if one such centre would be sufficient. Most countries operate national seismological networks to monitor with high sensitivity the occurrence of local earthquakes on their territories. The question was raised if and how such locally recorded data could be used to assist in clarifying events observed by the global system. Also mentioned was the possibility of monitoring the oceans using hydroacoustic recordings, and the use of on-site inspections and satellite photos to assist in the interpretation of seismic events. It was further suggested that a system to monitor atmospheric radioactivity could utilize the same principles of design and technical and administrative infrastructure as the global seismological system.

There was general agreement in the Group that much valuable work could be conducted under its current mandate. The Group expects to take up this item again and develop specific suggestions based also on the results of the evaluation of GSETT-2.

(Mr. Dahlman, Sweden)

However, the Group considers that it would be useful to acquire further information on modern global satellite communications soon, and suggests that, on the understanding that there are no financial implications to the Conference on Disarmament, the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) should be invited to send a representative to the next session of the Group to discuss possibilities for the use of INMARSAT in the development of the communications aspect of a future global seismic data exchange system.

The Ad Hoc Group suggests that its next session, subject to approval by the Conference on Disarmament, should be convened from 29 July to 9 August 1991.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts for introducing the report appearing in document CD/1065. Does any member wish at this stage to address the progress report or comment on the work of the Ad Hoc Group? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): This morning the Conference on Disarmament received the report of the Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. We are grateful to its Chairman, Dr. Ola Dahlman, for his presentation just now, which enables us to become a little more familiar with the content and the work of that scientific group. We have noted, inter alia, that the Chairman of the Group of seismic experts has felt compelled to clarify the scope of some terms of a political nature contained in the report. It is logical that that should be so, because the Group of Experts has a responsibility which is confined to the technical field and which consists precisely in considering international co-operation to detect and identify seismic events. Meanwhile, political assessments, as we all know, are a matter for the Ad Hoc Committee chaired by the distinguished Ambassador of India on the item of the nuclear test ban.

It is obvious that maybe political judgements are becoming increasingly necessary since it is difficult to understand the continuing delay in the initiation of appropriate negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapon tests once and for all. I think the time has come for the Group of seismic experts to carry out its work in harmony with what is taking place in the Ad Hoc Committee. I think that it can no longer continue to work without a political orientation. And consequently it is perhaps also necessary for the Conference to analyse its mandate to determine the appropriateness of linking its activity to political work, to see also whether the technical issues under its consideration are sufficient in respect of the verification of a nuclear test-ban treaty, whether it would be a complementary method and not a sole method in the task of verifying a treaty banning nuclear weapon tests. We consider that the task of the Group of seismic scientists is incontestably important. We are grateful to them for their efforts. Technicians from our delegation have at some time participated in analysing their work and we are certainly very grateful to them for their work. Now we will have to see what the political link is with the Ad Hoc Committee. We will also have to look at other methods of verification.

(Mr. Garcia Moritan, Argentina)

These are a few very preliminary comments to which my delegation intends to revert. We shall conduct a thorough analysis of the report contained in document CD/1065 to see whether we can find ourselves in a position to adopt it in due course.

The PRESIDENT: You will note that paragraph 15 of the progress report contains a recommendation concerning the next session of the Ad Hoc Group, to be convened from 29 July to 9 August 1991. I shall put that recommendation before the Conference for adoption at our next plenary meeting on Thursday, 7 March.

As regards paragraph 14, this contains a suggestion from the Ad Hoc Group that, on the understanding that there are no financial implications for the Conference the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT) should be invited to send a representative to the next session of the Ad Hoc Group. The secretariat has circulated the draft of a letter that I, as President of the Conference, will address to the Director-General of that organization. I am thus complying with rule 11 of the rules of procedure, which provides that the President shall, in full consultation with the Conference and under its authority, represent it in its relations with other international organizations. If there are no objections to the text of the letter before the next plenary meeting, I shall then proceed to send the letter as drafted.

May I now turn to another subject? You will recall that at the opening of the annual session, we took a decision concerning participation by States non-members in the Conference's work. In connection with the informal meetings being held on the substance of agenda items 2 and 3, I have received communications from the representatives of Chile and Spain, making it clear that their original requests should be understood as also covering those informal meetings. In fact, the clarification from Chile has already been discussed at the informal meeting held last week on the substance of agenda item 2. As these clarifications are in order, if I hear no objection I shall take it that the clarifications received from the representatives of Chile and Spain enable them to participate additionally in the informal meetings relating to the substance of agenda items 2 and 3.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I also wish to inform you that I have received a communication from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences, which oversees utilization of conference resources financed by the United Nations budget. In that communication, I am requested to inform the Conference of its contents as well as of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 45/238 A of 21 December 1990. As the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations made a statement on this question at our opening plenary meeting on 22 January, I will invite him to report to us on the letter that we have received. I now give the floor to Ambassador Komatina.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 43/222 B, the Committee on Conferences is entrusted with responsibility for determining the ways and means that might ensure the optimum utilization of conference facilities, including documentation, and to monitor the implementation of all General Assembly resolutions on the organization and servicing of, and documentation for, conferences and meetings. Many recommendations from the Committee have been adopted as General Assembly resolutions aimed at improving the efficient and effective use of the conference resources available. The most recent resolution of the Assembly on this subject, resolution 45/238 A, inter alia, notes the efforts made by a number of organs to improve the utilization of conference-servicing resources; invites United Nations bodies, in making requests for conference services in accordance with their respective mandates, to ensure that the conference services requested are sufficient to enable them to carry out their tasks fully and match, to the extent possible, their actual requirements; and urges all organs and bodies to intensify their efforts to improve their utilization of requested conference-servicing resources.

The intent of this resolution, and those that preceded it, is to assist organs serviced by the Secretariat of the United Nations in making the best possible use of the conference-servicing resources provided to them without adversely affecting the successful work of the organs in question. This can be accomplished through a variety of means, such as eliminating as far as possible avoidable cancellations of meetings and other arrangements. The Chairman of the Committee on Conferences indicates that one way of reducing the number of avoidable cancellations would be to establish a timetable for the session based on past practices and patterns of the Conference as well as on the anticipated need for time for informal consultations or for processing of in-session documentation. He also notes that if the Secretariat is informed well in advance of cancellations, this increases the possibility of reassignment of conference-servicing resources to other bodies wishing to meet.

In view of the great importance accorded to the question of the improved utilization of conference-servicing resources, the General Assembly, in operative paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution 45/238 A, requested the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences and the Secretary-General to maintain their contacts with all organs serviced by the United Nations Secretariat in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of conference services allocated to them, and requested the presiding officers of those organs to bring the concerns about the utilization of conference-servicing resources to the attention of the organs concerned.

As you pointed out, Mr. President, I reported to the Conference at its 577th plenary meeting on the services to be assigned to it. I also informed the members that we were not using all the services assigned to us and gave the figures of the total of hours of full services lost during 1990. In fact, this is the only area where our utilization of available resources has not been very successful. As far as the other recommendations addressed to us by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences are concerned, I believe that the programme of work adopted for the annual session, as well as the weekly timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies, fully cover

(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

the concern expressed by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences. By the arrangement of the weekly timetable, we have been able to inform the Conference Services Division of cancellations of meetings in advance, so that the resources available could be reassigned to other meetings. We will report accordingly through you, Mr. President, to the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his statement.

As is the practice in the Conference, the secretariat has circulated today the timetable for meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the coming week. The timetable is as usual only indicative and subject to change if the need arises. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As agreed by the Conference in the timetable of meetings for the current week, we shall hold, immediately after this plenary meeting, an informal meeting devoted to the substance of agenda item 3. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of the Soviet Union.

Mr. BATSANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation plans to make a statement here soon, and I think we shall then have an opportunity to welcome you to your responsible post, Sir. I have taken the floor for a brief piece of information. Some time ago in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons it was announced that on Thursday, after the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, that is yours truly, proposes to and is ready to meet with States not members of the Conference which are taking part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. This meeting is to be held in room I, right next door.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Batsanov for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

I shall now adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 7 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.